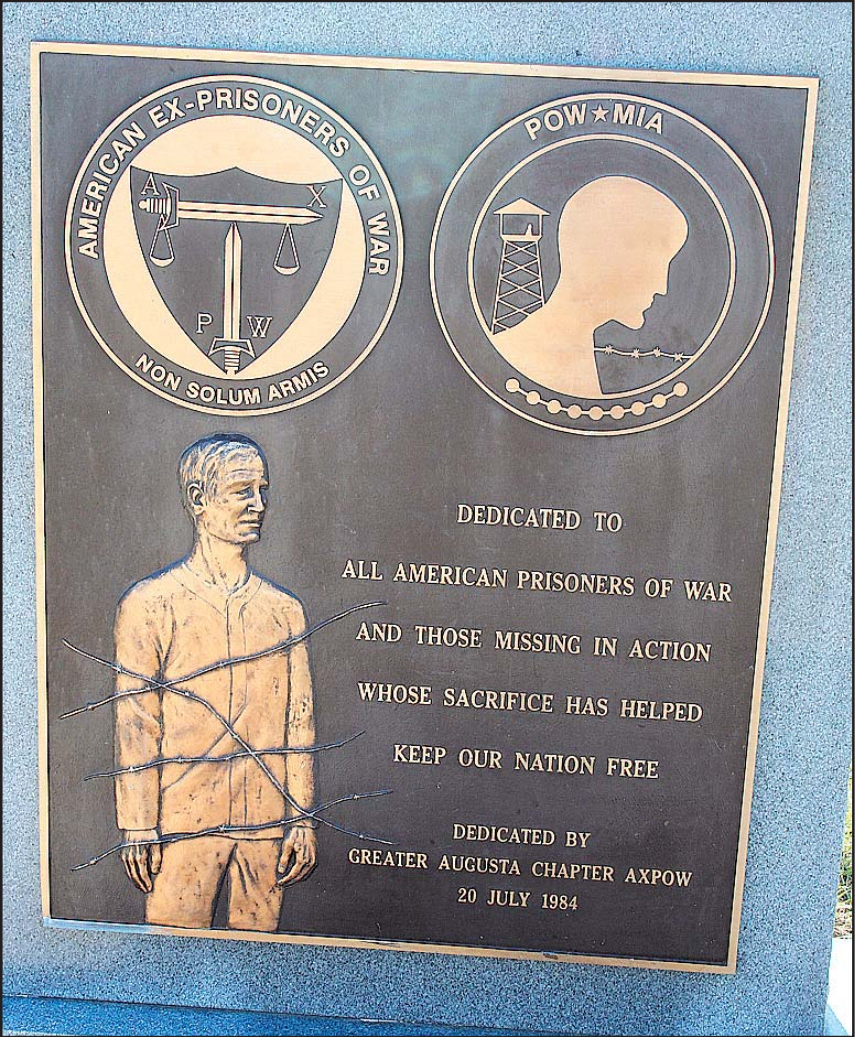


# Spectrum



Photos by Bonnie Heater



## Remembering Prisoners of War, Missing in Action

**Bonnie Heater**  
*Signal staff*

Fort Gordon paused on Sept. 19 to remember the sacrifices and service of those who have been Prisoners of War, those who are still Missing in Action and their Families.

During the National POW/MIA Day Recognition ceremony held at the POW/MIA monument on the corner of Chamberlain Avenue and Kilbourne Street on post, a former POW spoke to the crowd, which included several former POWs and their Families.

Retired Col. Quin Herlik of the Augusta area, a former POW during the Vietnam conflict, told about his personal experience. “People talk about sacrifices for God and country – the POW has made them,” said the master Army aviator. “People talk

***“We will never give up. We will remain at pursuit of our fallen comrades and we will do this until they are home.”***

**Col. Jack Bryant**  
*Fort Gordon Chief of Staff*

about hell and what it must be like – the POW has been there. People talk about standing up to our enemies under the worst possible conditions of brutality; the POW has experienced it and survived.

“As a POW, you owe your life to your captor’s humanity. You owe your daily bread to his compassion,” said the Green Bay, Wis., native. “You must obey your captors’ orders or suffer the consequences. The days are long. They can be very lonely when in solitary confinement. You feel the constant hunger, the constant cold or heat, the constant humiliation, but worse of all is the constant realization that you are not free.

“During our imprisonment, we found that there was an inner strength to draw upon, a strength developed over the years through the influence of Family, through education, through friends, through God and religion, through your military training and from that particular ‘psyche’ that comes from being an American,” said the commander of the Greater Augusta Chapter of American Ex-POWs.

The 30-year veteran served two tours in Vietnam. He commanded the 146th Aviation Company in Saigon in 1968-1969. It was nine months into his second tour that he was shot down on the Vietnam-Cambodia border in 1969 while flying an Army fixed wing aircraft, the U-1A, also known as the Otter.

At the time the major with more than 900 hours of combat flying was commander of a 250 man aviation company in Saigon. Their mission was highly classified; it was to locate Viet Cong units. After taking repeated runs of fire their aircraft was hit and Herlik was forced to put the plane down in a rice paddy. Unfortunately, it was right in the middle of a battalion of Viet Cong.

During their captivity and march north to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, he observed the burning of farms and a family being killed. At one point they were fired upon by members of a North Vietnamese Battalion. “The Viet Congs shielded us with their bodies,” he said. “We are alive today because of them”

After arriving in Phnom Penh, they were placed in jails. Four weeks later while still in Cambodian prisons they discovered their co-pilot, who was left for dead back in the rice paddy, was alive in a Cambodian hospital. “The Cambodians asked the Viet Congs to turn him over to us,” Herlik said. President Richard Nixon obtained their release by writing a letter of friendship to their captors.

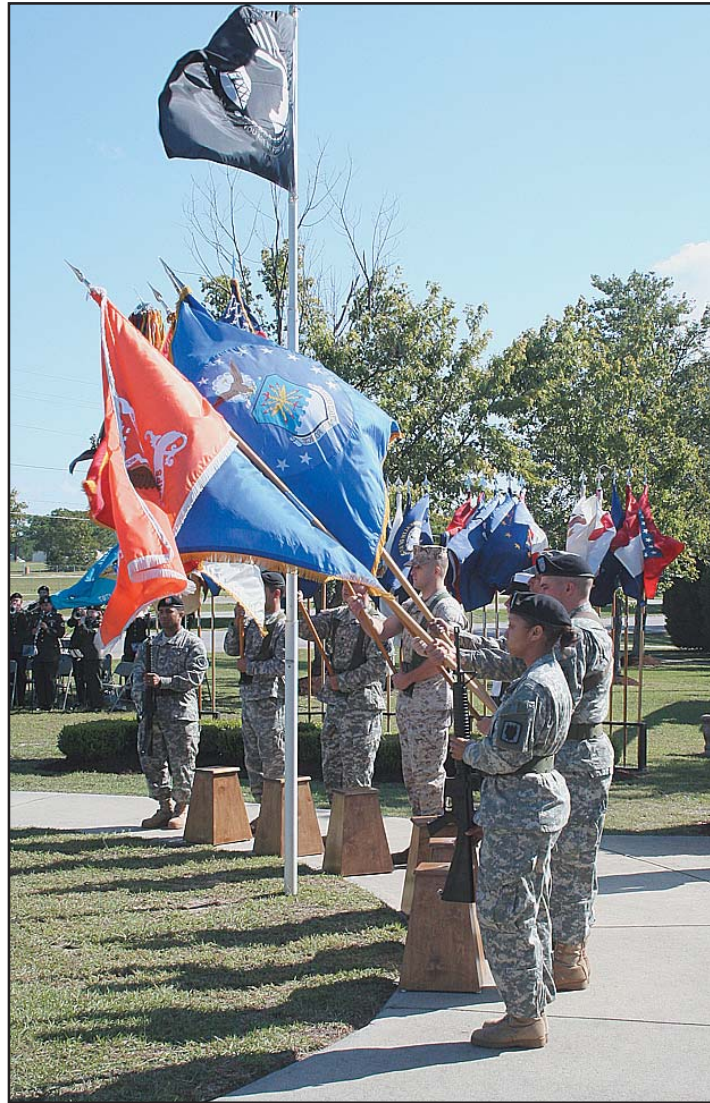
According to Col. Jack Bryant, Fort Gordon chief of staff, who introduced Herlik, there are 1,752 Americans still unaccounted for from the war in Southeast Asia as of Sept. 18 of this year. “In Fiscal Year 2008 the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Com-

mand out of Hickam Air Force in Hawaii has 70 investigations or recovery missions planned,” Bryant said.

“In fact, the Department of Defense POW Missing Personnel Office announced Sept. 4 the remains of the three U.S. service men from World War II have been identified and will be returned to their Families for burial with full military honors. We will never give up. We will remain in pursuit of our fallen comrades and we will do this until they are home.”



**Retired Army Staff Sgt. Edward Williams, a Vietnam veteran, places an America flag atop the memorial cross located at the POW-MIA Monument on Fort Gordon in memory of his fallen comrades in the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions.**



**(Above) Members of the Installation Support Platoon, who served as the All-Service Color Guard, render military courtesy during the playing of taps by Sgt. Brad Perkins of the 434th Army Band.**



Photo by Stephanie Brooks

**(Above and right) Soldiers from Fort Gordon and Central Savannah River Area veteran group representatives placed wreaths at the POW/MIA monument in remembrance of those who are missing or killed in action in all wars and conflicts.**